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General

Western Samoa, an independent state, located in the South Pacific Ocean, and a member of the British Commonwealth, consists of two large islands and several small ones lying W of 171°W.

Western Samoa consists of the inhabited islands of Upolu, Savai'i, Manono, and Apolima and the uninhabited islands of Fanuatapu, Namua, Nuutele, Nuulua, and Nuusafee.

The island of Upolu extends about 45 miles from E to W and up to 15 miles from N to S. Savai'i is also about 45 miles across but is 22 miles wide. The other seven islands of Western Samoa are quite small.

The climate is tropical with the rainy season from October to March. The dry season is from May to October.

The terrain is composed of a narrow coastal plain with volcanic, rocky, and rugged mountains in the interior areas.

The islands have numerous volcanic peaks, the highest being Mount Mata'aga, 1,850m on Savai'i, and Mount Fito, 1,100m high on Upolu.

Savai'i has a central core of volcanic peaks which are surrounded by a lava-based plateau, lower hills, and coastal plains.

Upolu has a chain of volcanic peaks stretching the length of the island with hills and coastal plains on either side.

Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region A) is in effect.

See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

Currency

The official unit of currency is the tala, consisting of 100 sene.

Government

Western Samoa is an independent State and a member of the British Commonwealth with a constitutional monarchy under a native chief.

Western Samoa has a Head of State and also Prime Minister. The present Head of State has a lifetime tenure of office but succeeding ones will be elected for a term of five years. The Legislative Assembly of 47 members and a Speaker are elected every three years.

Administrative districts, based mainly on geographic regions, are used in the operation of government services such as health, education, police, agriculture, etc.

The Supreme Court has full jurisdiction in civil, criminal, and constitutional matters. Its Chief Justice is appointed by the Head of State on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

The capital is Apia.

Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

January 1, New Year's Day; Good Friday; Easter Monday; April 25, Anzac Day; June 1, National Day; first 3 days in June, Independence Day; second Sunday in October, White Sunday; Arbor Day; and December 25, Christmas Day.

Industries

The main industries are based on timber, tourism, food processing, and fishing.

Languages

The official languages of Western Samoa are Samoan (Polynesian) and English.

Time Zone

The Time Zone description is XRAY (+11).

U.S. Embassy

The ambassador to New Zealand is accredited to Western Samoa and is situated at Apia. The mailing address is P. O. Box 3430, Apia.